

Today marks World AIDS Day. It is a time to reflect on an epidemic that turns 26 years old this year.

It is no secret that HIV/AIDS has devastated populations around the world. We as Americans have a tremendous opportunity to continue our tradition of innovation, research and leadership.

In the past thirty years, our own congressional district has pioneered critical HIV/AIDS research. Companies like Abbott, Baxter, Takeda and Astella pharmaceuticals are providing new treatments, better testing and, above all, hope.

In the Congress, I have joined with a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers to advance a pro-science agenda that empowers research, treatment and eventually a cure. I am a co-sponsor of several key pieces of HIV/AIDS legislation including the Early Treatment for HIV Act and the Microbicide Development Act.

In addition to legislative action and advances in the private sector, Chicago is home to a world leader in HIV/AIDS advocacy. The AIDS Foundation of Chicago led by Executive Director Mark Ishaug and Director of Policy Jim Pickett is at the forefront of the fight against HIV/AIDS. The contributions of their work have reached places as far as Nigeria and China.

On this World AIDS Day I reflect on the battle we have taken on as a world leader in medical research and the road ahead to finding a cure.